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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/I AND EUR/SE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/02/2017

TAGS: PREL IZ TU

SUBJECT: TURKEY PREPARING FOR IRAQ NEIGHBORS MINISTERIAL

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (S) Summary: Turkish MFA Iraq Coordinator Oguz Celikkol met October 2 with Ambassador to outline Turkey's plans for the upcoming Iraq Neighbors Ministerial in Istanbul, November 2-3. Participants will finalize the statement during sub-ministerial planning sessions on November 1-2. MFA is completing the draft statement, which it believes should reaffirm the continuation of the working groups; propose a new committee on economic cooperation between Iraq and its neighbors; express support for the UN and the USSYG's concept of a UN support mechanism for the neighbors' process; and advocate a meeting between the UNSYG and Iraqi political parties. Celikkol welcomes U.S. input on the ministerial statement and hopes to get us a draft text by about October ¶12. He solicited U.S. advice on securing President Talibani and PM Maliki's participation, noting that FM Babacan would encourage their attendance at separate events during his October 20 trip to Baghdad. Babacan plans to use his upcoming tour of Middle East capitals to solicit support for the Ministerial and the Neighbors process. End Summary.

¶2. (C) The Ambassador met October 2 with MFA Iraq Coordinator Oguz Celikkol to discuss plans for the upcoming Iraq Neighbors meeting in Istanbul. Celikkol reported the GOT plans to officially open the Ministerial portion of the meeting on November 3, with preceding planning sessions on the afternoon of November 1 and the following morning. At 8 PM on November 2, Foreign Ministers will attend a working dinner to finalize the statement, which will be presented at the plenary meeting on November 3. Celikkol noted the schedule will be similar to Sharm el Sheikh. MFA will send out amended invitations on October 3 with the revised dates. Celikkol added, as he has received confirmation that UK Foreign Secretary Miliband will attend, he did not see any reason Saudi Arabian FM Al-Faisal could not. Due to a concurrent energy summit in Cairo, the Egyptian Government has urged postponement by another day. As PM Erdogan and FM Babacan must be in Washington by November 5, Turkey believes that further delay is impossible.

¶3. (C) Celikkol reported he had previewed the GOT's proposed ministerial statement outline with U.S. officials the week

before. One paragraph will reaffirm the continuation of the three working groups. A second will propose a new committee on economic cooperation between Iraq and its neighbors, drafted in such a way as to not duplicate the International Compact. A third paragraph will express support for the UNSYG's concept of a UN support mechanism (vice secretariat) to facilitate the Neighbors process. A fourth paragraph will express support for the UN role in Iraq, and Turkey's idea for this is that ministers should call for a UN-led meeting, preferably in Istanbul, of all political parties represented in the Iraqi parliament. After the draft is completed, the MFA will provide a preview copy to the Embassy, probably by about October 12. The MFA intends to widely distribute the draft statement during the last week of October.

¶4. (S) According to Celikkol, FM Babacan will utilize his two-part tour to Middle East capitals to garner support for the Ministerial. He noted tentative plans for Babacan to visit Baghdad on October 20 (please protect date) to meet with Iraqi PM Maliki, President Talabani, FM Zebarai, and Vice Presidents al-Mahdi and al-Hashimi. While in Baghdad, Babacan plans to express Turkey's interest in Talabani and Maliki's attendance at the Istanbul Ministerial, which Turkey believes would be helpful. Celikkol solicited U.S. advice on encouraging the participation of the two leaders.

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WILSON